I: What do you want to know?

Write down five questions about astronomy that you would like explained in this class. “Stupid” questions are encouraged.

II: Background Reading for class on Aug 30

Read about the motions of the earth, sun and stars on pages 14-25 of the text. Describe which of these phenomena have you observed. Come to class on Monday with a question on what you have observed and how it relates to what you have read.

III: Timekeeping & Calendars (to be discussed in class on Sep 1)

Reading: chapter 3, page 43-54. Can you find a way to perform the experiment described in figure 3.6? It would make a good observation for your journal.

We now take the accuracy of clocks and the calendar for granted, but major corrections such the gregorian reform of 1582 can be very confusing. How much rent should you pay your landlord if that happened this October? Should Cornell charge you for a full semester if nearly two weeks are cut out of the middle? When should you celebrate your birthday if you were born on October 12, 1581?

I: Motions of the Moon, Planets, and Eclipses

Read about the motions of the moon and planets on pages 25-37 of the text. Describe which of these phenomena have you observed. Come to class on Monday with a question on what you have observed and how it relates to what you have read.

II: Greek astronomy

Read about greek astronomy in Chapters 4 and 5, pages 63-93. Ponder this question - why do we now believe this description of the universe to be false?